

Enables Borough and Local Organizations to Continue Valuable Community Efforts

October 28, 2009

Media, PA – Today, Congressman Sestak congratulates Lansdowne Borough for its designation as a Preserve America Community. These designations are issued through the United States Department of the Interior and delivered by Michelle Obama, who serves as the Honorary Chair of the program (letter included below). This will enable the Borough and local organizations to continue to preserve valuable historic and cultural resources, foster civic engagement, and encourage economic activity in Lansdowne. Furthermore, participation in the Preserve America program will increase Lansdowne's visibility and help ensure the community's vitality. Only 30 other communities in Pennsylvania are designated Preserve America Communities.

"The preservation of Lansdowne's historic character is essential in order to shape its future," wrote Congressman Sestak in his August 17th letter to the Director of the Office of Preservation Initiatives of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (letter included below.) "Because of the borough's efforts, Lansdowne remains a tight-knit community of 11,000 where one can still walk its quiet streets and enjoy its Victorian architecture and charming 'Main Street.'" In 1682, after William Penn opened the area to European settlement, Lansdowne became a quiet, agricultural community, which it remained until the 19th century. It still honors these roots at its weekly Saturday morning farmer's market, and the presence of Farm Fresh Express, which delivers fresh, locally-grown organic groceries year-round.

As part of its preservation efforts, the Lansdowne community has successfully nominated two National Register Historic Districts – the Lansdowne Park district and the Henry Albertson Subdivision – and two individual buildings– the Lansdowne Theatre and the Twentieth Century Club. The local government, led by Mayor Jayne Young and Borough Manager Craig Totaro, and community organizations such as the Historic Lansdowne Theater Corporation, led by Matt Schultz, and the Lansdowne Economic Development Corporation, led by Michael Grant, have been committed to preserving Lansdowne's historic character and sense of place by enacting a historic district ordinance, rehabilitating the theater into a performing arts center, and promoting the town's history and architecture. The Lansdowne Theater already houses two new, locally owned businesses in its storefronts, a good example of how historic preservation encourages reinvestment in a community. One of these businesses, Cinema 16:9, owned by David Titus, holds a 41 seat digital theater, and offers independent movie rentals. Within the first couple months of opening it was voted, one of the Top 5 Indie Theaters in Philadelphia, and one of the top five best hot dogs in Philly. The Twentieth Century Club was built in 1911 by and for a small group of women whose objective was "to create an organized center of thought and action among women, for the protection of their interests and for the promotion of science, literature, and art." In its heyday the club had 500 members. The clubhouse was deeded to the borough in

1979 and now serves as a community center and rental venue.

Just six miles west of Philadelphia, Lansdowne is a first-generation suburb situated in Delaware County. Its 11,000 residents are active in their 1.2 square mile community. The Borough has a long tradition as a community of artists, and continues to provide a home to a rich mix of arts and a seemingly endless variety of cultural activities. Lansdowne boasts the most Victorian homes of any town in Pennsylvania, and is a No Place for Hate community.

The current Borough Hall is an adaptive reuse of the borough's 1903 firehouse, used through 1984. The first floor houses a model of the borough circa 1910. The Lansdowne Railroad Station (1902), designed by renowned Philadelphia architect Frank Furness, was restored after a 1992 fire and is used daily by regional rail commuters.

Lansdowne participates in a regional program called Classic Towns of Greater Philadelphia, an initiative of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission designed to foster the growth of the region's older communities by promoting what makes each community a special place to live, work, and play.

Preserve America is a federal initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy our priceless cultural and natural heritage. The goals of the program include a greater shared knowledge about the nation's past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage assets, and support for the economic vitality of our communities. Since the program's inception in 2003, the First Lady of the United States has served as the Honorary Chair of Preserve America. To find out more about Preserve America, visit

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a

series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, the Congressman was the first Director of Deep Blue, the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the Global War on Terrorism. He served as President Clintons Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Congressman Sestak is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.

Dear Citizens of Lansdowne,

Congratulations on your designation as a Preserve America Community, and thank you for all that you do to enhance our Nation's heritage. Your community holds a treasured place in the American story, and it is through your vision and dedication that our history will be upheld and our future will be renewed.

President Obama and I are proud of your community and we applaud your achievement. The Americans who came before us built this country on the strength of their hopes, hard work, and perseverance. Now you are using those same qualities to help share our history with today's Americans and those of tomorrow. By strengthening your community, you are strengthening our country. You are showing that each of us has a role to play in shaping a better future, and we can do it by honoring our past.

Thank you again for all that you do, for your continuing commitment to our Nation's heritage, and for your enthusiastic participation in the Preserve America program. I wish you all the best, and I have high hopes for your continued success.

Sincerely,

Michelle Obama

August 17, 2009

Mr. Ronald D. Anzalone
Director
Office of Preservation Initiatives
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 803
Washington, DC 20004-2501

Dear Mr. Anzalone,

In recognition of the Borough of Lansdowne, Pennsylvania's commitment to community preservation, I strongly support the Borough of Lansdowne's application to become a Preserve America community. The preservation of Lansdowne's historic character is essential in order to shape its future. Because of the community's efforts, Lansdowne remains a tight-knit community of 11,000 where one can still walk its quiet streets and enjoy its Victorian architecture and charming "Main Street."

As part of its preservation efforts, the Lansdowne community has successfully nominated two National Register Historic Districts – the Lansdowne Park district and the Henry Albertson Subdivision – and two individual buildings– the Lansdowne Theatre and the Twentieth Century Club. The local government and community organizations have been committed to preserving Lansdowne's historic character and sense of place by enacting a historic district ordinance, rehabilitating the theater into a performing arts center, and promoting the town's history and

architecture.

It is important for Lansdowne to become a Preserve America community as this program will enable the Borough and local organizations to continue to preserve valuable historic and cultural resources, foster civic engagement, and encourage economic activity in Lansdowne. Furthermore, participation in the Preserve America program will increase Lansdowne's visibility and help ensure the community's vitality.

For these reasons, I fully support the Borough of Lansdowne's application to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to become a designated Preserve America community. I request your full and fair review of this application, and ask you keep me informed of its status. Please direct your correspondence to my District Representative, Susan Heppler at 600 N. Jackson St. Suite 203, Media, Pa. 19063 or 610-892-8623.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joe Sestak
Member of Congress

<http://www.preserveamerica.gov/> .